/44 cont'd/
585 maneuver busily. Having no napkin, one ends by licking one's
262 fingers at first, then rubs /15/ them on one's boots to soften the
264 leather. A bowl of bouillon finishes the meal. Gin is poured, and
[527] the table is cleared. This is the famous feast called susen by the T'ou-jen and ts'iuen iang si by the Chinese, "the dinner with the sheep served whole." It is the largest dinner given in the region.

585 It must be admitted that for such a dinner the dishes are neither
261 large in number nor dainty, and that the culinary art has not reached
[252] the heights; but this does not keep the good stomach and the T'ou-jen spirit from being at their zenith. Everything is relative in this world below.

171 This dinner, these hosts, this scene make one think of dinner
264 among nomads on the steppe. There, the dinner is served in a spacious tent; among the T'ou-jen it is given in the courtyard covered with cloth; there, all are seated on the ground on pieces of felt or on straw, here the same; there, rudimentary plates and dishes, here the same; there, the main dish of the grand feasts is sheep served whole, here also. Why don't the T'ou-jen put on a feast like the Chinese, putting some ten tables in a courtyard, each one for eight guests? It is because among the T'ou-jen the old customs of the nomads live again at the important moments of life. Once and for
585 all let us call attention to the vestiges of the ancient nomadic organi-
262 zation of the T'ou-jen, met with on the occasion of a wedding. In the olden times they busied themselves with the raising of large
585 animals (oxen, sheep, horses). The proof of it is that all the presents
431 given in former times and recalled on the occasion of wedding feasts
231 consisted either of horses or oxen; the bride's family used to give an ox to her maternal uncle, a horse to the maternal uncle of the groom, and another horse to the groom himself; the groom's family used to give an ox to the maternal uncle of the bride; they still require a mare as earnest for the girl; the meat at the dinner is invariably
[262] mutton; again it is mutton which is offered at various times, according to matrimonial custom, and it is mutton which is given to the guests at the moment of /46/ departure.

231 Nowhere is pork mentioned as being offered as a gift, although at present the T'ou-jen are occupied principally with the raising of